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Centre for Trade Facilitation and Electronic Business (UN/CEFACT)

Item 3 of the provisional agenda

Eighth session, 27-30 May 2002

**eBusiness Transition Working Group (eBTWG) Report**

Submitted by the Chairman of the eBTWG Working Group \*

The present report is being submitted to the Plenary for information.

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\* The present document is reproduced in the form in which it was received by the secretariat.

This report outlines key activities by UN/CEFACT's eBusiness Transition Working Group as they relate to key priorities of its work program as well as to their relationship to the work of other UN/CEFACT Working Groups, such as EWG, BPAWG and TMWG.

## **General**

The eBusiness Transition Working Group (eBTWG) was created by the UN/CEFACT Steering Group (CSG) in July 2001 for the purpose of continuing UN/CEFACT's commitment and responsibility in the ebXML initiative (phase 2). The group was formed to build on the success of the earlier ebXML Joint Initiative between UN/CEFACT and OASIS, which delivered its first set of specifications in May 2001.

The mission of the eBTWG is to identify specific work items to facilitate the completion of the activities related to the ebXML Business Process and Core Components Projects and to oversee the further development of those items. Detailed information about these work items can be found on the ebXML Web site: [www.ebxml.org](http://www.ebxml.org). In addition, this group is responsible for developing and maintaining the UN/CEFACT eBusiness architecture to ensure consistency with the ebXML architecture specification.

## **1st Meeting - 8-12 October 2001, San Francisco, CA, US**

### **Business Process and Information (BPI) Modelling Specifications**

There are seven projects that link the various aspects of the UN/CEFACT business and information modeling vision. UN/CEFACT members were limited in linking the work of the ebXML Joint Initiative to the UMM. Originally the intentions were to do so, but opposition from OASIS members to make modeling mandatory resulted in the compromise to have modeling only optional. Now that this part of the work falls under the responsibility of UN/CEFACT, these projects have been put forward to realize the UMM-based modeling vision.

In summary the BPI projects are:

- Business Process Schema Specification
- Business Collaboration Patterns and Monitored Commitments Specification
- Business Process Information Model Exchange Schema Specification
- Business Collaboration Protocol Specification
- Business Entity Library Specification
- Common Business Process Catalog Specification
- UML to XML Design Rules Specification

It was interesting to see the gain of new memberships from organizations that are fully supportive of UN/CEFACT's Business Process and Information Modelling vision, including the link to UMM.

This meeting served not only to identify the links between the various projects, but also to learn and take into account work in this area from other organizations. It serves as proof that UN/CEFACT is not alone in its view of a "Top-Down" approach. This work will become the foundation of our eBusiness vision.

### **eBusiness Architecture**

There were questions raised about this project. Many felt that UN/CEFACT did not need its own architecture. However, as was true for the BPI work, the ebXML architecture was limited to having it only mention modeling instead of taking the position that modeling forms the foundation. This

project is an absolute must for UN/CEFACT. Its goal is to outline the various BPI related projects, components and workflow. Not only that, it will link our UN/EDIFACT and Core Components work to the BPI work. In addition by doing so the team will be able to identify changes that may be required to the ebXML architecture, taking fully into account all the work of our other projects to ensure that ebXML will stay fully aligned.

## **Core Components (CC) Specification**

The team worked very hard in its efforts not only to get its first Working Draft out for eBTWG review, but also to work with the other teams to define its relationship and dependencies to those efforts. The goal of the CC team was to put out for eBTWG review its specification before the next meeting. This helped in not only defining what CCs are, but allowed other projects to adjust their specifications to ensure consistency. The fact that there is not more to report is not any indication that there was not much to say, or that their work is not important. It is an indication that the team was working very hard without being in the spotlight of conflict, and because of that, the team progressed its work from the ebXML and JCC efforts as planned. This was good news!!!

## **Core Component Realization Specification**

Originally titled "XML Business Document Library" the project was renamed to "Core Component Realization (CCR)". The deliverables are still valid as defined in the project proposal. Some had predicted that this project in itself would cause problems with our OASIS relationship. Ralph Berwanger (eBTWG vice chair) and myself have spent much time with Jon Bozak (UBL chair) and have agreed that there is no conflict between the two efforts.

The main difference is that this project is foremost about putting Core Components in to an ebXML registry, allowing the creation of a CC Library in XML. This will allow at implementation time anyone to retrieve CCs with all their semantic meaning and relationships to other CCs in the correct context. This will also allow CC development to take in contributions from industry groups or vendors, as they will be stored as candidate CCs during the evaluation process. This is not at all a task of the CC specification itself (nor UBL).

CCR uses a neutral representation for core components that is not dependent on Schema dialects, and similarly provides assembly mechanics. So the good news is, from this toolset one can build what one wants— and develop alternative formats from the same metadata base. CCR's neutral format will be XMI. The CCR team is working with the UML2XML team to review how this integrates with the XMI and XMI2 work so that the UML tools can import/export with this format. It is vital to have the ability to generate a selection of formats from the same semantic base, especially as this then is future proof.

In summary, the work of the CCR team is fully aligned with the CC and BPI work. Together they are implementing the eBusiness vision of UN/CEFACT. Since xCBL, VCML, OAG's BODs and Simpl-eb components will be submitted as candidate CCs, the CC library will be truly the global library of XML components based on today's variety of XML solutions.

## **Summary**

85 participants from Europe, Asia, Australia and North America attended the first meeting. Due to the September 11 tragedy and the military action against Afghanistan, the Sunday meeting 25 registered members did not occur. All in all the numbers were very encouraging.

The meeting helped to identify the relationships between all projects and clearly showed that none of them were stepping on any EWG efforts, but instead are providing the specification to realize the ebXML goal as outlined in the UN/CEFACT vision. The fears of many UN/CEFACT HoD and EWG members proved false. The good news from the meeting was that UN/CEFACT was able to

provide the forum for those ebXML'ers that had indicated in May that they wanted to continue under UN/CEFACT in order to realize a shared vision of eBusiness. This meeting was clearly the beginning for many to become part of UN/CEFACT. As a side note, UN/CEFACT must make sure, as we are moving forward in creating a new structure for all our working groups, that our final solution takes fully in to account eBTWG efforts and contributions in a way that they feel they are equal participants within the UN/CEFACT structure.

## 2nd Meeting - 4-8 February 2002, Seattle, WA, US

As mentioned in the TMWG report this meeting was a Joint TMWG/eBTWG meeting. About 100 participants were present at the meeting. Overall this meeting was a great success. The synergy between the Business Process and Core Component members was more than one could have expected after some negative email exchanges before the meeting. Both sides had a great week and met many times together in their efforts to resolve the issues. The result being that the StC committee agreed to asked the eBTWG membership to send out the CC specification for worldwide review.

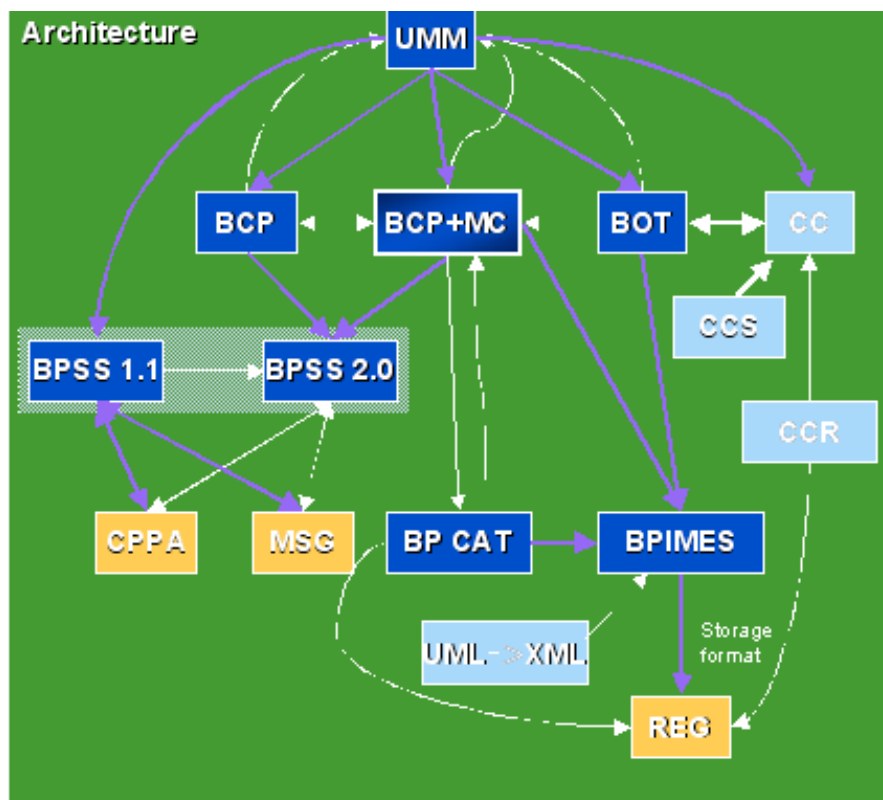
Because the meeting was held at the same place X12 was meeting, many participants utilized the opportunity to exchange ideas during the week with the X12 community.

## Project Progression

Overall all project teams made much progress. There were a number of joint meetings to help gain understanding between the various projects as well as to ensure consistency.

During the first meeting a project overview diagram was created that showed the relationships amongst the various projects. This diagram served as reference during this meeting and was used to review those relationships. It has by default become the high level eBTWG Overview (see figure 1).

**Figure 1. eBTWG Project Overview**



eBTWG consists of eleven project teams:

- UN/CEFACT eBusiness Architecture (UEA)
- Business Process Specification Schema (BPSS)
- Business Collaboration Patterns and Monitored Commitments (BCP&MC)
- Business Entity Library (BEL)
- Business Collaboration Protocol Specification (BCP)
- Common Business Process Catalog (BP CAT)
- Business Process Information Model Exchange Schema (BPIMES)
- Core Components (CC)
- Core Components Supplement (CCS)
- Core Components Realization (CCR)
- UML to XML Design Rules (UML2XML)

The UN/CEFACT Modeling Methodology (UMM) provides the framework under which the eBTWG project teams concurrently develop technical specifications that fit seamlessly together with sufficient detail for eBTWG conformant implementation. Thus the interfaces between UMM and BCP&MC, BEL, and BCP. As direct users of the UMM, the emphasis of the BCP&MC, BEL, and BCP project teams has been to validate and refine the Business Requirements View (BRV) of the UMM Meta-Model to fully support the commitment - fulfillment activities of a business process collaboration. Thus the feedback link to UMM from these projects.

An ebXML business process and information model draws from reusable

- common business process models as provided for in a reference library by BP CAT (imported from various levels of business process models, i.e., transactions, collaborations, processes),
- simple "best in class" business collaboration patterns as determined from industry examples by BCP&MC,
- pieces of collaboration patterns, e.g., patterns of how commitment categories are specified, resources are described, etc., as determined in BCP&MC,
- business transaction patterns as already established in the UMM Business Transaction View (BTV),
- business entity types, defined by BEL as business information objects that each have a life cycle that transitions through defined states in the fulfillment of the commitments in a collaboration,
- core components/business information entities as defined by CC.

It is evident that BCP&MC must coordinate with BP CAT, BEL, and CC, as well as with the TMWG in proposed UMM updates.

BCP will show how all layers and patterns of the business collaboration should be integrated into a "protocol" of business information and business signal exchanges that can be implemented in compatible business service interfaces by business partners. Thus, BCP draws heavily from the business collaboration requirements and patterns as determined by BCP&MC, and in turn provides the Implementation Framework View (IFV) of the UMM.

CC and BPSS are carried over from ebXML Phase 1, and are now coming into fruition in Phase 2 with the benefit of much iteration of revisions and comments. Information required to enter and determine successful execution of a business collaboration or transaction, i.e., states of business entities, will benefit from the CC library as a reference for conceptual information entities. Business entities in the UMM BRV (requirements workflow) will then be normalized in on-the-wire business

documents as business information entities in the UMM BTV (analysis workflow). CCS provides independent validation of the CC Technical Specification through industry applications of the CC methodology. In turn, reusable blocks of core components/business information entities are harvested in creating the initial content of a CC library. CCR provides the technical specification for "realizing" conceptual core components/business information entities in XML format so that they can be stored and retrieved in (from) the ebXML REG/REP

BPSS is a semantic subset of the UMM Meta-Model that supports the specification of the business process elements necessary to configure a runtime system capable of executing ebXML business transactions (in BPSS 2.0) and business collaborations (in BPSS 3.0). Thus, we have the BPSS 2.0 interaction with UMM, and CPPA and MSG of the ebXML infrastructure in configuring a runtime system among pairs of business partners. The additional input of BCP&MC and BCP is required for BPSS 3.0 to incorporate the UMM BRV model.

The runtime BPSS must necessarily be accessible in XML format in the ebXML REG/REP. BPIMES will facilitate this by providing the requirements for storage and exchange schema for ebXML business process and information models. UML2XML provides production rules for mapping UML-based business process and information models, as assembled by BCP&MC, into a BPSS. Together BPIMES and UML2XML provide the specification for production, storage and exchange of business process and information models in XML format.

UEA provides the umbrella specification that covers the work of all of the UN/CEFACT eBusiness projects. As such it elaborates on the eBTWG projects discussed in this overview and shows how they relate to the other eBusiness activity in UN/CEFACT.

## **New Project**

The StC committee agreed in principle to a new project that would serve as a migration/outreach team to help organizations and/or industry groups migrate from their current implementations to ebXML BOV (Business Operational View) as defined by the eBTWG specifications. The details of the project proposal are to be worked out after the meeting.

*Since that meeting the project was approved by the eBTWG StC. It is called eBusiness Outreach. There has been discussion within the ebXML Joint Coordination Committee about the possibility that this project may become a Joint OASIS-UN/CEFACT project to help promote ebXML.*

## **eBTWG/TMWG Joint Meeting Results**

On the positive side were the results from the work on UMM by the BPI projects and TMWG. The outcome will be a more user friendly UMM. In addition, CC agreed to work with TMWG to ensure alignment with their work.

For more details please see the TMWG report (TRADE/CEFACT/2002/13).

## **eBTWG Concerns**

There was great disappointment in learning at the meeting that no information had been forthcoming from either the Consultation or HoD list in regard to the next step in the process. A majority of participants were interested to find out how the CSG had planned to address the various comments in regard to the proposal. The lack of any indications by the CSG resulted in the eBTWG StC to agree to a number of resolutions that address its concern.

The majority of eBTWG members were very concerned to learn that the request to ask the HoDs for their approval in principle had not take place as indicated in the timetable of the proposal. They didn't understand how HoDs could support the proposal without having the time to consult with

their user community to gain support and pass on comments to the CSG by the deadline set (22 Feb).

*Since the last eBTWG meeting the CSG has released the revised proposal taking into account most of UN/CEFACT's working groups' comments. eBTWG has expressed its support for the new proposal. However, the members do have some general concerns in the process to be used to resolve the last outstanding issues. There are suggestions that the current proposal (revision 12) be amended by the UN/CEFACT Heads of Delegation in order to accommodate requests from a few participants for complicated refinements to operating rules, meeting frequency or voting structures. eBTWG respectfully suggests that this approach is misguided. UN/CEFACT working groups always have been, and should continue to be, empowered to adopt and refine their own operating rules. If there are detailed issues to be resolved, the participants themselves are vastly better situated than the UN/CEFACT plenary to resolve them, and to develop suitable and stable-working methods based on their own needs and expertise.*